

# Violence and Harassment in the Workplace – Parking Lot Safety Fact Sheet



## WHY WORRY ABOUT PERSONAL SAFETY IN A PARKING LOT?

How can something that we use almost every day be considered a dangerous place? Depending on its location, design and the time of day, parking lots can present a risk of workplace violence. The good news is that there are some basic safety principles that you can use to help keep you safer when traveling to and from your car.

## WHAT ARE SOME TIPS WHEN USING A PARKING LOT?

Always:

- Park near your building in a highly visible and well-lit area.
- Park near the parking attendant, if there is one, or near the stairs or a well-lit exit in an underground lot.
- Use the main building entrance – avoid rear or secluded exits.
- Keep your valuables, including purses and recent purchases, out of sight. Always lock them in the trunk if you have to leave them in the car.
- Lock the doors and roll up windows once you are in the vehicle.

Have a plan ahead of time. Know where you can go for safety and how to call for help.

DO NOT:

- Do not use more than one parking spot as it may anger another person.
- Do not park next to large vans, trucks or other vehicles as they will block your sight.
- Do not have a personal identification tag on your key ring. If your keys are lost or stolen, a thief will be able to find your car or house.
- Do not approach someone if they are loitering near your vehicle. Walk to a safe place such as a lighted store, house or building. Call the police.

## WHAT ARE SOME TIPS WHEN WALKING TO AND FROM THE CAR AFTER DARK OR IN A HIGH-RISK NEIGHBOURHOOD?

Always try to walk with a friend, co-worker, or a security officer. Give your escort a ride back to the main entrance so they do not have to walk back alone.

If you have to walk alone:

- Have a co-worker watch you from a window.
- Wave to them on the way to your vehicle.
- Wave even if no one is watching to give the illusion that someone is watching you.
- Stay on well-lit streets, and in the centre of the sidewalk. Stay away from hiding spots such as bushes, doorways, alleys and parked cars. Cross the road if necessary.

Always be alert to your surroundings. Walk with confidence. Keep your head up and look around. Look directly at people but do not stare at them. Trust your instincts when you feel something is not right.

Do not

- Do not dig in your purse or bag.
- Do not wear headphones or be distracted by a cell phone conversation.
- Do not carry heavy briefcases or bags that may get in the way.
- Do not carry any type of weapon, including pepper spray. Weapons can just as easily be used against you and are illegal in some jurisdictions.

#### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO AS YOU APPROACH YOUR CAR?**

Be prepared when you leave your business, or when you leave the car for work.

Have ready:

- Your keys to unlock the vehicle.
- Your keys or cardkey to unlock building doors.
- A whistle or other personal alarm.

Have the keys ready to unlock the door as you get near the vehicle or door. As you approach your car, look around, inside, and even glance underneath for people who may be present. If you are suspicious, walk away. Go to a safe place and call for help.

Report suspicious behaviour to the parking lot attendant, security or the police.

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